

Chairman Wagner, Vice-chair and Committee members,

SB 791 - Support

While most election reform advocates realize no system is totally perfect, Ranked Choice Voting (RCV) has demonstrated over and over to be one of the better ones available.

I listened to the Senate Rules hearing today and was dismayed by some of the spin I heard about Ranked Choice Voting, while few of the drawback of STAR voting were mentioned at all.

I would like to add these small points.

RCV does NOT violate One-Person, One-Vote. It is simply One-Person, One-Vote, per One Round, like a delayed runoff would be – a system most voters know well.

While it is easy to get baffled by the fast-talking opponents, the truth is a voter's back-up choices do count. If a voter's 2nd choice is no longer in the race, then their 3rd choice would count, and so on. The vote is NOT wasted.

Some groups want you to think that your backup votes either don't count or the outcomes are 'weird'. While it is mathematically possible for an RCV outcome to elevate a candidate the voter didn't expect, the point is they cannot use that strategically. You can only understand this MIGHT have happened until after the race – so it does not change the way you would vote. It is best to vote your favorites.

Additionally, opponents have pointed to the same race for decades now (Burlington VT mayor) and indeed it is one of the only elections where the numbers appear to show this happened. [The technical term is monotonicity.] Again, no system is perfect, but one analysis of 100 RCV elections showed only 1 such race. NOT what opponents would have you believe.

RCV does provide a majority result. It may not be in the first round, but in the final round of active ballots, you get a majority winner. It is just like a delayed runoff (but without the cost, effort, energy AND low turnout).

Support is strong and reference to REPEALS is greatly exaggerated. Some examples they cited were in areas (like Cary, NC) where it was used as a test model only, and not yet continued. Another, the 'famous' Burlington VT area, has recently RE-ADOPTED RCV.

The STAR people would have you believe that the only reason some support RCV is that they don't know any better. On the contrary, there are different benefits, different priorities and different viewpoints that lead many around the nation to understand the pros/cons and STILL pick RCV.

One more point is that RCV does not favor ANY particular party – neither the major ones nor the 'third' parties.

Please support these two bills, SB 343 and SB 791.

Michael Sawicky